

MDCPS
3/16/2020

Exhibit F

Emergency Telework Policy

In the event of an emergency declared by the Office of the Governor as a result of a natural or manmade disaster or public health emergency during which work cannot safely continue in some or all agency offices, the Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services will adopt the following emergency telework policy to maintain the essential functions and priorities of the agency.

The following policy applies to all MDCPS employees and sets out guidelines on determination of essential and non-essential staff and defines the parameters and expectations of staff working remotely.

Policy

It is the policy of MDCPS to expect employees with job functions and duties essential to carrying out the agency's functions and priorities to telework (work remotely) to perform their duties outside of the primary office setting when a natural or manmade disaster or public health emergency renders work in some or all agency offices unsafe. The Commissioner of MDCPS will determine if telework is necessary, and whether it is required agency wide or for certain positions or locations. If an emergency is declared, essential staff designated for telework will be expected to work from home, a satellite office, or from the road throughout the period of emergency as defined by the Commissioner.

All MCPS employees are considered essential. Job responsibilities may change dependent upon the event and needs of the agency. The Commissioner may change staff or unit designations as essential or non-essential at any time.

Leave and Requirement to Work

MDCPS will adhere to regular work schedules, prior approved overtime and on-call procedures if telework is deemed necessary. While operating under the Emergency Telework Policy, all essential MDCPS personnel are expected to work a full 8-hour day from their remote work location(s). MDCPS employees will adhere to all policies governing leave, overtime and work scheduled as addressed in the SPB Employee Handbook, Chapter 3. In accordance with state law, the Commissioner of MDCPS has determined that all non-essential MDCPS personnel in affected locations shall be placed on Administrative Leave during an emergency unless otherwise determined by the Commissioner. Agency Comp time may be granted to essential MDCPS personnel that work more than the regular 8 hours in a workday.

Essential MDCPS personnel must use current processes for requesting leave or reporting absences to their supervisors while operating under the Emergency Telework Policy. Due to the emergency declarations, the following changes to traditional leave requirements have been published by the MS State Personnel Board.

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1. The statutory requirement that accrued personal or compensatory leave must be used for an employee's illness requiring an absence of one day or less is temporarily suspended.
2. The statutory requirement that accrued personal or compensatory leave must be used for the first day of an employee's illness requiring his or her absence of more than one day is temporarily suspended.
3. The statutory requirement that in the event an employee has no accrued personal or compensatory leave, the first day of sick leave must be taken as Leave Without Pay is temporarily suspended.
4. The suspension of these requirements also applies to an employee's absence related to an illness in the employee's "immediate family" (defined in Section 3.2 of the State Employee Handbook).
5. The statutory requirement that an employee provides certification from an attending physician for Major Medical Leave for each absence of thirty-two (32) consecutive working hours is temporarily suspended

Guidelines for Telework

Teleworking staff must designate a teleworking location from which to leave and return daily, typically the employee's home. While teleworking, MDCPS staff will adhere to regular work schedules, prior approved overtime and on-call procedures. MDCPS staff should communicate any issues with work schedules to their immediate supervisor.

An employee's compensation, benefits, and work responsibilities will not change due to teleworking. The amount of time the employee is expected to work per day, or pay period, will not change as a result of teleworking. The employee must be available and accessible during their specified work hours. Teleworking employees must comply with all agency rules, policies, and procedures.

Requests to work overtime or to use sick, annual, or any other leave must be pre-approved by the employee's supervisor in the same manner as if the employee was working in the agency's primary workplace. An employee shall not work overtime (comp) unless authorized in advance, as per established policy.

While teleworking, MDCPS staff will submit weekly calendars of activities to their immediate supervisor through Office 365 Outlook. Calendars should be specific to activities and include details and timeline information by day. For example, "8:00 am MACWIS Narratives for cases: J. Smith, K. Jones, L. Williams" or "9:30 am home visit case M. Johnson at 123 Main Street, etc". Supervisors are responsible for reviewing calendars and verifying supporting documentation to ensure an 8-hour workday.

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Under no circumstances should an employee who is teleworking ever meet with a client, stakeholder, or community partner at his/her home.

Communication

In order to maintain close communication and standards of professionalism while working from an alternative location, the teleworking employee shall:

- Notify their supervisor in writing of any change in the regular work schedule;
- Be available to supervisors and coworkers by telephone and email during core work hours;
- Return calls and emails within 24 hours of receipt;
- Have office calls forwarded to the alternative site; and
- Answer the telephone professionally at all times.

Equipment and Maintenance

The employee and the agency will agree upon equipment that will be used in teleworking. State owned equipment may be used only for legitimate state purposes by authorized employees. The employee will be responsible for protecting state owned equipment against damage and unauthorized use. The employee agrees that the agency will have access to state owned equipment for property audits, maintenance, and retrieval if necessary.

MDCPS staff that are designated to telework must have the equipment and access needed to complete their job duties. MDCPS utilizes Microsoft Office 365 services that allow all employees to access their email and electronic documents through the Microsoft cloud (www.office.com). If additional equipment or access is needed, staff must contact the IT Department to secure the needed equipment and/or access. MDCPS staff must only access the network through secure designated applications.

Agency Files and Records

The agency's security controls and conditions for the use of state-owned equipment for official work will also apply while teleworking. All official agency records, files, data, and documents must be protected from unauthorized disclosure or damage and returned safely to the primary workplace as quickly as feasible. The employee must abide by all laws, rules, and regulations related to client confidentiality and agency data. The employee also must abide by rules promulgated by the agency concerning the use of computer equipment and electronic records. The employee must follow agency procedures for network access and take all necessary steps to protect the integrity of systems and not allow agency files to be viewed by others.

Paper files that contain confidential client information ordinarily should be stored at the agency's primary work location. If it is necessary for a file to be taken to the alternative work location, the file must be signed out properly and returned as quickly as possible. No agency paper files containing confidential client information should be stored at an employee's home or alternate

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work location. Teleworking employees are encouraged to work from electronically stored, password protected files as much as feasible while reducing the reliance on paper files and documents.

Workplace Safety

Teleworking staff must, to the greatest extent possible, designate a separate work space in the alternate workplace for the purposes of teleworking, and must maintain this area in a safe condition, free from hazards and other dangers to the employee and the agency's equipment.

Travel

Employees who telework will be reimbursed for mileage to and from their designated alternative work location when the travel is required to conduct agency business outside the alternative work location. If the employee uses a primary alternative work location other than their home, the employee will not be reimbursed for travel between their home and the alternative work location.